

High-Speed Rail in Albany

Why Do We Need High-Speed Rail?

According to a recent memo from the Progressive Policy Institute:

- High-speed rail will create hundreds of thousands of well-paid jobs. By some measures, every \$1 billion spent in high-speed rail construction will create 15,000 direct jobs-and tens of thousand more will grow from operating and maintaining the train system. These are jobs that cannot be outsourced.
- High-speed rail makes economic sense. The United States population will increase from 300 million to more than 390 million by mid-century. Those citizens will need transportation, and high-speed rail is cheaper to build and causes much less environmental damage than new highways and airports.
- High-speed rail has a proven record of economic development. With station stops located every 30 or 40 miles between terminals, high-speed rail has spurred growth in rural France and Spain. Fast, efficient transportation could bring similar benefits to economically depressed Main Street.
- High-speed rail is a big step toward energy independence. Present day diesel powered trains use 27 percent less energy per passenger mile than cars and 21 percent less than airplanes, according the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. If high-speed rail corridors were operated with nonpolluting electric locomotives, they could reduce carbon dioxide emissions by as much as six billion pounds annually, according to the Center for Clean Air Policy.
- High-Speed rail is almost infinitely expansible. A double track railway, once in place, can meet heavy traffic needs with no additional capital expenditures except more trainsets. Highways and airports, on the other hand, require more lanes, and runways to accommodate greater traffic loads

The United States Department of Transportation [reported](#) that an investment in public transportation creates almost 20 percent more jobs than the same investment in building roads or highways.

High-Speed Rail: A Benefit for Albany

- **Economic Development:** The capital region has focused on attracting high technology industry to the region. High-speed rail will enhance these efforts, particularly the Albany to New York City route, which will open up Albany to

new business opportunities.

GE Turbines, Super Steel, Port of Albany, and the Glenville Industrial Park will also benefit.

- **Enhancing Existing Investment:** In 2007, the Albany/Rensselaer station was ranked the 10th busiest Amtrak station in the country, and the Capital District has a very strong history of investing in rail. The Capital District's REVEST program links several rail programs to improve intercity travel. High-speed rail will supplement these existing efforts.
- **Environmental/Energy:** Carbon emissions per passenger mile traveled are significantly lower for passenger rail versus an automobile or airplane.
- **Quality of Life:** High-speed rail will allow for easier travel to New York City and Western New York, including Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo.